

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3544

S E C R E T LISBON 4224

EXDIS

FOR ASST SECY HARTMAN FROM CARLUCCI

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: APPROACH TO COSTA GOMES

REF: (A) STATE 1766653, (B) LISBON 4216

1. OUR PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF LAST NIGHT'S EVENTS, INCLUDING TRIUMVERATE IS ON THE WIRES.

2. THIS SOLUTION IS TYPICAL OF COSTA GOMES' APPROACH; AVOID A SHOWDOWN AT ALL COST AND HANG ON TO YOUR POSITION. HIS SPEECH SAID ALL THE RIGHT THINGS (RECOMMEND YOU READ IT) TO CONVINCE PEOPLE HE STILL A MODERATE, BUT HIS ACTIONS UNDERCUT MODERATE STRATEGY AND LEFT GONCALVES AND HIS FRIENDS HANGING IN THERE. IF PRO-COMMUNISTS CAN WIN OVER OTELO, THEY HAVE ALL THE TICKETS TO CONTINUE THEIR OFFENSIVE, BUT THIS IS A BIG IF. SAME APPLIES TO MODERATES.

3. COSTA GOMES SAID IN HIS SPEECH MANY OF THE THINGS I PLANNED TO SAY IN DEMARCH; LISBON IS BECOMING ISOLATED, THE PEOPLE ARE BECOMING DISENCHANTED, THE "REVOLUTION" IS GOING TOO FAST FOR THEM, PORTUGAL MUST DEPEND ON WEST, AND WITHDRAWAL OF WESTERN SUPPORT (HE CALLS IT A MANEUVER) COULD LEAVE PORTUGAL IN TROUBLE. HE EVEN POINTS OUT HOW EASY A "MANEUVER" IN AZORES WOULD BE, A POINT THAT WOULD BE IMPOLITIC FOR US TO MAKE.

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4. THIS ROUND MAY NOT BE OVER YET, DEPENDING ON MODERATES REACTION AND/OR ON WHETHER PRO-COMMUNISTS ATTEMPT ARRESTS. HENCE, I THINK WE SHOULD NOT JUMP IN MIDDLE RIGHT NOW WITH DEMARCHE TO COSTA GOMES. BUT AT SOME POINT, I THINK WE NEED TO LET HIM KNOW THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THE THINGS HE SAID IN HIS SPEECH COULD COME TRUE UNLESS HE BEGINS TO ACT LIKE A PRESIDENT INSTEAD OF A REFEREE. RIGHT NOW DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE MOMENT, BUT I AM PREPARED TO DO SO AS SOON AS OPPORTUNITY ARISES.

5. ONE INTERESTING FOOTNOTE. AMID ALL THE FUSS YESTERDAY, INCLUDING BOYCOTT BY MELO ANTUNES OF AFM ASSEMBLY, COSTA GOMES INVITED MELO ANTUNES TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO CSCE. THIS IS GOOD IN SENSE THAT MELO ANTUNES WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO WORK ON COSTA GOMES; IT IS BAD IN SENSE THAT COUNTRY WILL BE LEFT TO TENDER MERCY OF GONCALVES AND OTELO IN WAKE OF SERIOUS POLITICAL CRISIS.
CARLUCCI

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